**History of a monument to Adam Mickiewicz**

A monument to Adam Mickiewicz, the poet who encouraged patriotic sentiments among Poles and Lithuanians, in Vilnius had been considered since the mid-19th century. The political situation of the region at that time made it impossible to implement the idea, but this changed after the First World War, when the Russian Empire collapsed and Vilnius became part of Poland.

The Polish community of interwar Vilnius really cared about the erection of a monument to one of the most prominent poets of Vilnius – Mickiewicz certainly needed to be commemorated in the city with which he was closely connected, as it was here that he spent his youth studying.

However, this task soon became a hotbed of public opinion.

In 1923, Zbigniew Pronaszko, a sculptor from Krakow, proposed that the monument he had created the previous year be erected in Vilnius’ Town Hall Square: the twelve-metre-tall poet was to be cast in bronze or concrete. Unfortunately, the sculptor’s proposal was rejected as too modern and out of keeping with the environment of the Town Hall Square.

At the same time, a military committee was set up, which aimed to erect a monument to Mickiewicz. The Pronaszko’s proposal proved acceptable to this committee, and in 1924, on the right bank of the Neris River, near the present-day Palace of Concerts and Sports,

a model of the sculptor’s monument to the poet was erected, constructed of plastered planks.

For some people, such a modern monument seemed horrible; for others, it was relevant, reflecting the poet’s significance in those times. The model of the Pronaszko Monument had captured the public’s attention for years – it stood on the bank of the Neris until 1939, when it had to be dismantled due to its poor condition. Initiatives to erect a monument to Mickiewicz continued after 1924, two competitions were held, but eventually the Second World War stopped the implementation of the idea. It was not until 1984 that the monument designed by sculptor Gediminas Jokūbonis was erected in Vilnius, next to St. Anne’s and Bernardine churches.